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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5564

INFO RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 6791

RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 5638

RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 1339

RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ PRIORITY 2195

RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY 0441

RUEHMU/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA PRIORITY 1356

RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY 3902

RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 0800

RUEHQQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 2278

RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY 3642

RUEHDG/AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO PRIORITY 0269

RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY 1060

RUEHROV/AMEMBASSY VATICAN PRIORITY

RUEHAO/AMCONSUL CURACAO PRIORITY 0901

RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL PRIORITY 0553

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0380

RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL PRIORITY

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA PRIORITY 0869

RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 CARACAS 002165

SIPDIS

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NSC FOR DFISK AND DTOMLINSON
DEPT PASS TO G/TIP AETERNO AND LBROWN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/10/2031

TAGS: [ELAB](#) [KCRM](#) [KDEM](#) [KWMN](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SCUL](#) [SNAR](#) [VE](#)

SUBJECT: HUMAN TRAFFICKING NGO A.M.B.A.R. - PROGRESS REPORT

REF: CARACAS 00880

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Classified By: Robert Downes, Political Counselor,
for Reason 1.4(b).

¶1. (C) Summary. Poloffs visited the Women's Association for Well-Being and Reciprocal Assistance (A.M.B.A.R.), a recipient of an Economic Support Fund (ESF) Grant approved by the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (G/TIP). (reftel) Highlights of its volunteered three-month progress report are included below, as well as poloffs' observations and favorable impressions of this organization's progress. However, while A.M.B.A.R. is succeeding in spite of numerous obstacles, the upcoming closure of the Ministry of Interior and Justice's (MIJ) Crime Prevention Unit and the assumption of its duties by CICPC (criminal investigation police) will make life even more difficult for this NGO in a country that still does not view trafficking in persons (TIP) as a serious problem. End Summary.

¶2. (U) Background. Poloffs on July 17 received a tour of TIP NGO A.M.B.A.R., an anti-TIP organization that provides trafficking victims with assistance ranging from food and shelter to psychological counseling and legal aid. Poloffs visited A.M.B.A.R. facilities and met with Director Nury Pernia to discuss developments in the past three months. As background, Ms. Pernia explained that the trafficking problem in Venezuela centers on its role as a transit country. Women from Colombia, Brazil, the Dominican Republic and others arrive in Venezuela en route to Caribbean resort countries (Aruba, Curacao, etc.), as well as to Germany and other European countries. The process of repatriating non-Venezuelan nationals occurs after rescue with the

assistance of CICPC. The center primarily focuses its rescue efforts in the neighborhood of Chacao, where much of the city's prostitution occurs. In addition to rehabilitating and training victims, 87 dependent children currently take part in the center's daycare and preschool program.

¶3. (SBU) A House and a Home. A House and a Home, the project for which the ESF grant is devoted, is in full swing. The first of two payments totaling \$129,375 was dispersed on March 31; the second will occur in September after receipt of financial and progress reports. (reftel) As part of its rehabilitation efforts for victims of trafficking, the project provides medical and legal services, counseling, and professional training. Since the Embassy's last visit, the center has increased the number of computers to six, and A.M.B.A.R. beneficiaries can receive regular instruction on their use. As part of the effort to provide these women with a source of income, they paint ceramics, design and make jewelry and even have their own small-scale beauty parlor. Ms. Pernia reports that they intend to distribute the revenue from these ventures among all participants. Additional improvements noted include: the creation of a full medical consultation room, including a curtained-off examination portion as well as a sit-down consultation area to be used for sessions with psychologists. The main office has new tile flooring, and furniture that was previously torn has either been replaced or refurbished. The third floor/enclosed roof is nearing completion for use as a playground for toddlers.

¶4. (U) A.M.B.A.R. Report Highlights (full report available upon request):

-- Successful initiation of psychological and legal services, including: contracting of psychologists and lawyers to

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provide daily services, designation of consultation space and the purchase and installation of equipment. Sample of psychological services areas: child abuse, drug abuse, gender violence, family issues and truancy. Sample legal service areas: physical abuse, government benefits and child support.

-- Implementation of rehabilitation program for adolescents, focusing on reintegration with their families. Areas of focus include: self-esteem programs, reproductive health and STD prevention, computer classes and workshops on self-improvement.

-- Implementation of work training program for the purpose of instilling in adolescents an interest in education. Workshops include: computing, handicrafts, ceramics and hairstyling.

-- Improvements to mother/child program, focusing on the strengthening of mother/child relationships. Funding has been used to hire employees, improve designated space, buy equipment, provide employee training, pediatric visits and food for the children.

-- Of the \$129,000 grant, A.M.B.A.R. has designated the use of about \$65,000 (but not yet spent), has spent about \$24,000 and is developing plans for the remaining \$40,000.

¶5. (U) Plans for the Future. A.M.B.A.R. has recently expanded its operations to a center in the 23 de Enero neighborhood which will provide services directed towards prevention efforts (trafficking, H.I.V., and domestic abuse), as well as victimizer rehabilitation services. Planned for early 2007, A.M.B.A.R. intends to write and present to the BRV its own TIP report, a worthwhile and certainly ambitious endeavor. Ms. Pernia also plans to submit monthly reports to the Embassy, above and beyond the two requested in the terms of the grant.

¶6. (C) BRV Support and the Lack Thereof. Of particular note

and concern to both A.M.B.A.R. and poloffs is news of the dissolution of the MIJ's Crime Prevention Unit and the transfer of its trafficking prevention and prosecution duties to CICPC. The director of the Crime Prevention Unit, Lilian Aya Ramirez, had been a great ally of the center and was influential in helping A.M.B.A.R. secure a 20-year lease in an MIJ building for its expanded operations. The disappearance of that office means an even weaker tie between NGOs such as A.M.B.A.R. and the BRV, making requests for government support even more difficult. At the time of poloffs, visit, the children were busy opening toys donated by the Ministry of Domestic Affairs in recognition of Children's Day (July 16). However, contrary to hopes expressed in reftel comment, BRV involvement is not a common occurrence. As noted in this year's TIP Report and in government responses to same, the BRV does not find trafficking of persons or prostitution to be a real or serious problem in Venezuela. Ms. Pernia reported that in the past year, there resulted only one arrest out of 29 cases investigated. As far as funding, A.M.B.A.R. frequently runs into roadblocks in its efforts to engage official support.

¶7. (C) Comment. While the official six-month progress report is not due until the end of September, this interim report and observations from poloffs' site-visit demonstrate that A.M.B.A.R. has made great strides in its 12-year existence to provide a much-needed service to trafficking and prostitution victims. The center appears to be in extremely capable hands, and its resources appear to be very well-managed. However, the impending disappearance of the Crime Prevention

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Unit means that ostensibly, there is no office in the BRV that has trafficking in persons as its primary focus. The director of that unit was perhaps the only ally that A.M.B.A.R. had within the BRV, and her departure will undoubtedly not only make life more difficult for this NGO but will also seriously hamper any trafficking prevention and prosecution efforts in Venezuela. Emboffs will follow up on developments in this area, given that the BRV's indignation over Venezuela's Tier 3 status makes the upcoming closure of the Crime Prevention Unit rather puzzling.

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